

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00
DHA-02 /054 W

-----271613Z 084216 /47

O R 271505Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4906
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 8801

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IT, PINT
SUBJECT: INTER-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS

1. SUMMARY: I HAD AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION TODAY
(MAY 27) WITH SENATOR GIUSEPPE BARTOLOMEI, WHO IS
"MAJORITY" LEADER IN THE SENATE AND ONE
OF THE DC'S PRINCIPAL NEGOTIATORS IN THE INTER-PARTY
NEGOTIATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR MORE THAN
ONE MONTH. AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS FROM THE EMBASSY'S
REPORTING, THE DC HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH THE
PARTIES THAT CURRENTLY SUPPORT THE MINORITY GOVERN-
MENT BY ABSTENTION FOR AN AGREEMENT ON A LIMITED
NUMBER OF PROBLEMS URGENTLY REQUIRING GOVERNMENT ACTION.
THE DC LAUNCHED THIS NEGOTIATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE
TO OTHER PARTIES' CALLS FOR AN "EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT"
THAT WOULD INCLUDE ALL PARTIES EXCEPT FOR THE
EXTREMES OF RIGHT AND LEFT. BARTOLOMEI APPEARED
OPTIMISTIC THAT AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE REACHED, THE
PRINCIPAL QUESTION MARK BEING THE PSI. HOWEVER, HE
SAID, EVEN IF THE PSI DECIDES TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSED
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AGREEMENT, IT WILL PROVE TO BE ONLY A TEMPORARY
STOPGAP TO GET PAST THE SUMMER AND THE "CRISIS"
WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE REOPENED IN OCTOBER. END SUMMARY.

2. BARTOLOMEI SAID THAT THE DC IS TODAY TO PUT IN
WRITING THE POINTS ON WHICH IT BELIEVES, AS A RESULT
OF ITS EXTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS, AGREEMENT CAN BE

REACHED. BECAUSE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR GENUINE AGREEMENT ARE SO LIMITED, THE DOCUMENT WILL BE RATHER GENERAL, THUS LEAVING TO PARLIAMENT TO WORK OUT SOLUTIONS ON THE SPECIFICS OF THE SEVERAL CATEGORIES IN QUESTION (ECONOMY, LAW AND ORDER, PUBLIC SPENDING, UNIVERSITIES). BARTOLOMEI SAID THAT THE PRINCIPAL QUESTION MARK AT THIS STAGE IS THE PSI, WHICH HAS BEEN THREATENING A GOVERNMENT CRISIS TO FORCE A CHANGE IN THE PRESENT MINORITY-ABSTENTION FORMULA. THE CONCLUSION OF TODAY'S PSI CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING SHOULD PROVIDE AN ANSWER TO WHETHER THE PSI WILL ACCEPT THE LIMITED AGREEMENT WHICH HAS BEEN WORKED OUT.

3. BARTOLOMEI SAID THAT THE PCI VERY MUCH WANTS THE AGREEMENT, ADDING IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION THAT IT HAS NOT RAISED "POLITICAL" ISSUES LIKE PUTTING LEFT-WING TECHNICAL MINISTERS INTO THE GOVERNMENT OR VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY WITH THE MAJORITY ON THE ISSUES COVERED BY THE AGREEMENT. BARTOLOMEI SAID THAT IT IS HIS IMPRESSION THAT THE PCI IS SERIOUSLY TROUBLED BY INTERNAL PROBLEMS, SO MUCH SO THAT IT COULD NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, GUARANTEE THE COOPERATION OF THE CGIL ON UNPOPULAR BUT NECESSARY ECONOMIC MEASURES EVEN IF THE PCI WERE BROUGHT INTO THE GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE PCI IS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO EARLY ELECTIONS. BARTOLOMEI DISCOUNTED AS "PROPAGANDA" THE PANORAMA POLL WHICH PURPORTEDLY SHOWS THAT THE PCI WOULD GAIN IF ELECTIONS WERE HELD TODAY. HE SAID THAT THE POLLING ORGANIZATION IS CONFIDENTIAL

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NOTOIOUSLY LEFTIST AND INACCURATE IN ITS RESULTS; APART FROM THAT, HE SAID THAT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THE POLL AND IS CONVINCED THAT THE PCI'S LEADERS DO NOT EITHER.

4. BARTOLOMEI SAID THAT, EVEN IF THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS RESULT IN AN AGREEMENT, IT WOULD NOT LAST BEYOND THE SUMMER VACATIONS AND THE WHOLE PROCESS WOULD START ALL OVER AGAIN IN OCTOBER. WHILE HE OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT WELCOME ANOTHER PERIOD OF CRISIS AND UNCERTAINTY, AT LEAST THE PRESENT AGREEMENT WOULD PROVIDE SOME BREATHING SPACE AND THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE DC'S STRATEGY. THAT STRATEGY IS BASED ON THE PROPOSITION THAT THERE IS NO REAL ALTERNATIVE AT THE MOMENT AND THAT NEW PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WOULD NOT PROVIDE ONE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE PRESENT SITUATION APPEARS TO BE ACCENTUATING THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF THE PCI AND IS ALSO CAUSING SOME IN THE SMALL LAY PARTIES (PSI, PSDI, PRI) TO

RETHINK THEIR INSISTENCE ON BELIEVING THAT THE DC IS THEIR PRINCIPAL ENEMY AND THAT THE SOLUTION LIES IN BRINGING THE PCI INTO THE GOVERNING MAJORITY OR THE GOVERNMENT IN SOME WAY. PERHAPS, HE SAID, WITH THE PASSAGE OF SOME MORE TIME, THESE TENDENCIES WILL CREATE THE BASIS FOR A REAL ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT POLITICAL STALEMATE.

5. BARTOLOMEI ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND APPROVAL OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN POLICY. HE OBVIOUSLY LIKES ITS EMPHASIS ON EUROPEAN UNITY, AND COMMENTED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S SPEAKING OUT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS HAVING THE WELCOME SIDE-EFFECT OF HARDENING THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD THE FREE-WHEELING COMMUNIST PARTIES OF WESTERN EUROPE. BAROLOMEI EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE DISASTROUS EFFECTS OF COMMUNIST VICTORIES IN FRANCE AND ITALY ON EUROPEAN
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UNITY AND SECURITY.

6. COMMENT: BARTOLOMEI STRUCK ME AS ONE OF THE MOST INTELLIGENT AND ACUTE OBSERVERS OF THE ITALIAN SCENE I HAVE YET ENCOUNTERED. FOR THIS AND OTHER REASONS, I AM INCLINED TO ACCEPT HIS ASSESSMENT THAT THE MOST THAT CAN BE HOPED FOR AT THIS STAGE IS A LIMITED STOPGAP AGREEMENT THAT WILL PERMIT THE PRESENT MINORITY ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT TO CARRY ON UNTIL FALL. THIS IS NOT LIKELY TO PRODUCE MUCH POSITIVE ACTION ON ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC ORDER ISSUES, BUT POLITICALLY IT DOES NOT GIVE THE PCI ANY NEW POLITICAL BENEFITS, ALTHOUGH THE PCI WILL DOUBTLESS ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY THE AGREEMENT AS AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD.GARDNER

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IT
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